



Figure 3. Illustration of the Swansboro built steamer *Prometheus* (Watson 1995:51).

During the War of 1812, the British Navy imposed another blockade of the American coast. This blockade inevitably led to a slowdown in trade and ship construction. American privateers countered the British move by harassing British merchant trade. A Swansboro native, Otway Burns, became North Carolina's most famous privateersman during the conflict. When war was declared, he sailed to New York and purchased a fast vessel named the *Zephyr* for \$8,000. The 147-ton vessel, renamed the *Snapdragon*, was armed with five 12-pounders, fifty muskets and four blunderbusses. The *Snapdragon* cruised the South American coast, the West Indies, the Caribbean Sea and as far north as Greenland in search of British merchant vessels. Burns and his crew had great success, netting on one cruise an estimated \$2.5 million in British Prizes.

After the war, Burns began shipbuilding on the Swansboro waterfront. In 1818, he built the *Prometheus*, the first steamboat constructed in North Carolina (Figure 3). The following year he sold his shipyard to William P. Ferrand. Burns also served in the state legislature, and ended his career as lifeboat keeper at the Brant Shoals Lightship at Portsmouth, North Carolina (Barbour 1976; Brown 1960:43-45; Littleton 1983c:2; Sharpe 1954:972).

Between 1800 and 1861, William P. Ferrand, Charles H. Barnum, Cyrus B. Glover, and Robert Spence McLean were the town's chief exporters of naval stores. After 1840, Daniel L. Russell, Jr. became Onslow County's foremost cotton producer and exporter. Agricultural products became increasingly important in Swansboro's maritime trade after the War of 1812 and reached its